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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

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A radio talk by Mr. W. R. Beattie, horticulturist, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through Station WRC and 33 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, March 12, 1930.

In our garden calendar program today, I want to discuss the problem of increasing the net income of our farms and gardens by producing more of the family living requirements right at home. The reduction in acreage of several of our staple money crops has been recommended in order to stabilize markets, and we are receiving letters from many farmers asking for suggestions as to what to plant on their extra acres. A letter from a Texas cotton farmer is typical. He says "you advise us to reduce our cotton acreage, but do not tell us what to plant in place of cotton in order to maintain our income and make a living."

I realize that the problem is a difficult one, but I believe it can be solved right on the farm. Aside from clothing and a few of the staple groceries, the greater part of the family living can, under most conditions, be produced right at home. I refer to fruits and vegetables, milk and butter, poultry and eggs, home cured pork, and in some cases, beef and lamb grown and slaughtered on the farm. A good home vegetable garden alone will add \$125 to \$200 a year to the net income of the average farm family. Milk and butter will add \$75 to \$100 more, poultry and eggs another \$75 to say nothing of meats produced on the farm. I will venture that the total will exceed \$350 a year for the average farm.

My interest centers mainly in fruits and vegetables. I believe that under most conditions, there should be a fruit garden on the farm consisting of fruits that are adapted to growing in that particular region.

The home vegetable garden is the most important source of the farm family living, and yet I have visited hundreds of farms, especially in the Southern States on which there was no definite home vegetable garden maintained. However, sweet potatoes, collards, turnips, black-eyed peas, and occasionally watermelons were grown along with the field crops, but there was no real garden where a supply of the more important vegetables were being grown. In other sections, good gardens were found on practically every farm; gardens in which at least 10 different kinds of vegetables were grown throughout the summer months. Right here is where the southern farmer has the advantage over his northern neighbor in that he can have ten or more vegetables growing in his garden practically every month of the year. For the winter, there are spinach, kale, brocolli, turnip greens, cabbage, collards, onions, lettuce, carrots, radishes, and beets. The range of spring and fall crops is considerably greater, but in parts of the South the summer period presents the most serious problems in the production of vegetables. With proper care, however, the frequent plantings, a full line of vegetables can be maintained throughout the greater part of the summer.

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The canning of fruits and vegetables has been greatly simplified during recent years, and by canning and the proper storage of the vegetables grown during the summer, a supply can be provided for the entire year.

I have a neighbor whose grocery bills are something enormous. Every day in summer the grocer delivers to his door quantities of fresh fruits and vegetables. He has a rather large family and I know that it is often a problem with him to meet his bills. My grocery bills are never large, and aside from the purchase of a few southern-grown fresh vegetables during the winter, we produce the greater part of our supply on a small piece of land less than one-half the size of the ordinary farm garden. At times we have as many as 12 different products available in our garden, and our supply of fresh vegetables is maintained from the time of the maturity of the first crops in the spring until after frost has killed our garden in the fall.

To those who are facing the problem of cutting down acreage of standard money crops, my advice is plan carefully and produce a larger proportion of your living right at home. If I lived on a cotton or other farm where the acreage of the staple money crops was being cut to meet market conditions, I would certainly see to it that I made up for any loss of income by planting crops that could be used at home. Why not start now by planting an early garden and keep right on planting and cultivating until next fall. Don't neglect the money crops but keep the home garden growing.